

performed well ahead of schedule, even as others are performed late. The larger the project, the more likely this will happen (and the more difficult it is to accurately understand schedule status). By comparing the total value of work accomplished (BCWP) with the value we had expected to achieve to date (BCWS) we can see whether the overall project is ahead or behind.

The Most Common Earned Value Mistakes

We have used a simple example to demonstrate earned value analysis. Putting it to work on larger projects is obviously going to be a little trickier, and you need to be aware of two common mistakes that have tripped up many organizations in the past. Both mistakes are derived from the way the WBS is structured.

The right way to structure the WBS is to make each task finite with a specific, measurable outcome. This way a task can be started and completed. Sounds simple, right?

Here's the first mistake: Setting up your project with "level of effort" planning. This means rather than having discrete tasks, you just create categories, such as "design" or "engineering" and allocate a certain number of people to it over a fixed period of time. In our landscape example this would be the equivalent of just saying "labor" rather than defining specific tasks on the WBS. So the only measurement we have available is cash flow. For our landscape example it would be like the landscaper saying, "We said we would have three people working for six weeks, and so far we have had three people working for the first two weeks. So we are on budget and it's anybody's guess about schedule."

The second mistake is having tasks on the WBS that are so large in scope that we can only guess partial completion from week to week. This typically happens on a large project where tasks aren't broken down far enough. If we report progress on a weekly basis, but people are working on tasks that are many weeks long, then at each status meeting they are really only guessing their progress. That's the same problem that we started with. When tracking schedule status the only thing that we really know is whether the task is started and whether it is completed. In between those two points we are just guessing.

"So how's it going?"

Using earned value analysis we see that the landscaper is sufficiently on target to justify progress payments. Whether you have a cost-plus contract or a fixed price, whether your customer is in-house or external, the analysis we have performed provides an accurate view of progress for both cost and schedule.

Accurate project status will not ensure projects are on time or on budget, but you will get an earlier warning when you have a problem. That can mean more time to solve the problem and probably more options for solving it. Finally when you are asked, "How is it going?", you will have credible answers for a confident response.

Source

Verzuh, Eric. *The Portable MBA in Project Management*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2003. (pp. 162-167)

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DON CIO Chairs DoD Identity Management Senior Coordinating Group

Mr. Dave Wennergren, DON CIO, was recently named Chair of the new Department of Defense (DoD) Identity Management Senior Coordinating Group (IMSCG). Established by the DoD CIO in January 2004, the IMSCG provides senior oversight and coordination of DoD's biometric, smart card and PKI initiatives.

The IMSCG replaces three bodies: the Smart Card Senior Coordinating Group, the PKI Senior Steering Committee, and the Biometric Senior Coordinating Group. This consolidation produces a single forum that will streamline and integrate the management of DoD/DON biometric, smart card and PKI initiatives.

The IMSCG responds to the need within the Department of Defense to globally oversee and combine efforts of these important initiatives aimed at managing the identity of DoD employees and networked devices by improving the security of DoD's systems. The senior coordinating group will craft and monitor the Department's vision and strategy for utilizing identity management capabilities to enhance readiness, improve business processes and ensure necessary security.

Mr. John Stenbit, Assistant Secretary of Defense, asked Mr. Wennergren to chair this coordinating group based on the tremendous success of the Smart Card Senior Coordinating Group, which oversaw the roll out of over 4 million Common Access Cards throughout DoD. Mr. Wennergren has chaired the Smart Card Senior Coordinating Group since its inception four years ago.

The IMSCG consists of Flag/General Officer and SES representatives of each of the Armed Forces, OSD Principal Staff Assistants, National Security Agency (NSA), Defense Information Systems Agency (DISA), Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) and others. It is a cohesive DoD-wide policy, requirements, strategy and oversight group for managing the physical and virtual identities of all DoD personnel, support contractors and devices.

The IMSCG will focus on Department-wide interoperability standards, performance metrics, and ways to leverage identity management tools to enhance readiness, improve business processes and increase security. The group will receive support from the DoD Biometric Management Office, DoD Access Card Office and DoD PKI Program Management Office for their respective focus areas.

